

Fandom as a Middle Ground Fictive Queer Fantasies and Real-World Lesbianism in FSCN

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Introduction

Since 2005, there have been fan communities engaged in a variety of online queer reading activities devoted to the sensational Chinese reality TV show, *Super Girl* (Hunan Satellite Television Station, 2004–2011). *Super Girl* (hereafter SG) is an American Idol-style singing contest that only allows female participants. The highlight of this show, however, is the large number of contestants who look either “boyish” or “androgynous.”¹ Like many gay contestants on *American Idol*, who “have largely kept their [queer] identity under wraps,”² these female contestants on SG have never been willing to talk about their sexual orientations in public. The latent intimate relationships between these contestants, though, are the focal point of the show’s online slash fandoms.

This essay presents a case study of one of the largest and most popular slash fan sites for SG, *Fei Se Chao Nv* (hereafter FSCN). This site was built in 2006 and features slash gossip, slash vidding, and slash writings. By the end of August 2013, it had more than 459,000 entries and over 3,200 threads. The fan discourses on FSCN represent tensions between fans’ own slash identities, queer desires, and normative assumptions regarding lesbianism in cyberspace. The ways in which FSCN fans manage to isolate their virtual queer fantasies from both online and offline mainstream environments and their responses to nonfictional lesbian topics—

including the real-world lesbian scandals involving SG celebrities—signify that FSCN is an imaginative, self-contained place for voicing fictional queer desires. Yet, there is evidence that suggests that FSCN does not solely serve as an empowering utopia that fully resists and subverts heterosexual hegemony.

Although the online fandoms of some androgynous SG celebrities have become sites for fans to celebrate and emulate non-hegemonic aspects of gender and sexuality,³ there is some discord between the celebrities' online mainstream and slash fandoms. Recent scholarship on SG fandom indicates that mainstream SG fan communities often reject queer readings of SG contestants.⁴ One Chinese slash fandom scholar, Ling Yang, has given two possible explanations for mainstream fans' reactions. According to her, mainstream fans reject queer readings of SG celebrities because of their distorted understandings of lesbianism or because of their exclusive love for one particular SG celebrity.⁵ In light of these responses from mainstream fans, Yang argues that FSCN functions as an inclusive, supportive cultural environment for homoerotic narratives and queer communities to be formed.⁶ However, I argue that Yang and others' conceptualizations of online SG fan subcultures simplify the intricate cultural discourses fans draw upon to voice their desires for unconventional gender and sexual performances, as well as ignore the dynamics of fans' cultural identities in cyberspace.

This essay contends that FSCN acts as an imaginative, self-contained space that allows for the expression of fictional queer desires but does not function entirely as a liberating, non-heteronormative space as suggested in other writings on online SG fandoms. I argue that an examination of fan discourses on FSCN indicates how this slash fan site acts as a middle ground between normative notions of deviant lesbianism and queer fantasies about media characters. Fans often project normative cultural positions onto their virtual slash practices and, as a result, constantly suspend their queer challenging of mainstream culture's heteronormative ideologies.

Online SG Mainstream and Slash Fandom Discourses

FSCN is one of many fan forums built on Baidu Post Bar (hereafter Baidu). As the most popular virtual communication site in mainland China, Baidu allows individual netizens to set up forums, create threads, share information, and communicate with one another. As of 2012, it has more

than two million forums, most of which are online fandoms of entertainment media and popular culture worldwide. Both online SG slash and mainstream fandoms were set up on Baidu in 2005. The mainstream forums are named after individual SG celebrities and considered to be an official site for fans to share information about their idols. They are also filled with heterocentric fan activities focused on the show's androgynous celebrities. For instance, in order to refute lesbian rumors about SG celebrities whose outward appearance and personality are not traditionally feminine, fans post pictures showing the effeminate side of the celebrities, intentionally circulate gossip regarding the ambiguous relationships between SG celebrities and male stars, and share either fan-made or official audiovisual materials that feature fictional heterosexual romance stories about SG celebrities. Some fans also write heterosexual fan fiction and circulate them using sub-forums. Many SG celebrities often visit their mainstream fan forums, read fan entries, and communicate with their fans using Baidu.

It is necessary to note that most SG mainstream and slash forums are not access-controlled and allow visitors to read and respond to others' posts without registering as formal users. This feature enables SG fans to visit and/or engage in both mainstream and slash fandoms online. Many slash fans frequently go to mainstream sites to look for information that can be subject to queer interpretations. It is also common for mainstream fans to participate in online slash fandoms of their idols. Yet, this unique feature of online SG fandoms sometimes results in conflicts over queer readings of celebrities between mainstream fans and slash fans. Some fans post anti-slash entries on FSCN and condemn queer readings as personal affronts to SG celebrities. In response to these posts, several senior slash fans have openly declared that they do not identify as mainstream, "pure" fans (Chun Fen) of any individual SG celebrity and openly scorn mainstream fandoms.⁷ In a few extreme cases, some online SG slash fandoms have been hacked by mainstream fans or even forced to move to other communication platforms.⁸

Still, online SG fandoms allow fans to occupy both mainstream and slash identities and engage with heterocentric and queer discourses on female sexuality in different types of fan forums, thus encouraging slash fans to move between the offline normative, the online mainstream, and the virtual queer. While mainstream forums resemble offline, local, heteronormative society, slash fan sites assist some SG fans in partially evading the repression, restraints, and discrimination against queer identity in online and offline mainstream spaces. To some extent, the

plurality and performativity of SG fan identities confirm Alexander Doty's argument that "the queer often operates within the nonqueer, as the nonqueer does within the queer."⁹ Yet, SG slash fans' paradoxical claims to both their of their both online and offline mainstream identities further complicates the cultural discourses in which they struggle to articulate their queer readings of the show's contestants.

Slash Identities of SG Fans on FSCN

The online queer reading practices of slash fans defy heteronormative readings of the SG celebrities. However, slash fans' hegemonic positions in both mainstream online and offline spaces often confine their queer desires to virtual, imagined worlds, often hindering a complete transformation of imaginative queer practices in their online and offline interactions. In some cases, the real-world othering of lesbianism is reiterated and imposed within online slash fandoms. The slash discourses that allow room for expression of queer desires force virtual queerness to face real-life lesbianism and the taboos surrounding it. FSCN thus can be read as a site of negotiation between fans' queer desires and the heteronormative ideologies of mainstream society.

One particularly interesting characteristic of FSCN is that most of its slash fans have multiple pseudonyms. The names fans create on FSCN reflect their interests in queering the SG celebrities they post about. Fans refer to online usernames as "waist coat(s)/clothes/skin(s)" (Ma Jia/Yi Fu/Pi) and call the act of switching pseudonyms when moving from one site to another as a "change of waist coats/clothes/skins" (Huan Ma Jia or Tuo Yi Fu/Pi). However, many slash fans on FSCN employ usernames different from the ones they use to post information on mainstream forums, and many of them tend to hide their slash identities from other mainstream fans by switching between their mainstream and slash pseudonyms. SG slash fans' desire to keep their identities secret and untraceable on FSCN is so intense that when their mainstream usernames are sometimes traced back to their slash pseudonyms (it often happens when fans forget to change their pseudonyms) they beg that their slash identities not be revealed and delete their entries posted on slash sites.¹⁰ A senior fan on FSCN who discovered other slash fans' mainstream names also made fun of these fans' "carelessness" by saying, "You guys often forget to change clothes. Now the evidence against you has fallen into my hands."¹¹ As a few anonymous fans revealed during discussions of switching usernames, they do not use their mainstream names on FSCN so as to keep their

participation in queer readings on slash sites secret from fans on mainstream sites.¹²

As Constance Penley argues, “fans use pseudonyms not just for the joyful and imaginative expression of alternative and shifting identities. They also have something to hide.”¹³ Susanne Jung also feels that “many fans use pseudonyms, aware of the fact that their ‘hobby’ may not stand well with friends, family or employers.”¹⁴ SG fans’ concealment of their slash identities, then, helps build an online “closet.” While they are able to celebrate their queerness in this virtual closet, their refusal to come out of this online slash closet shows that they are aware that their queer fantasies are considered deviant and unacceptable in mainstream online fan forums. By employing and frequently changing pseudonyms on FSCN, SG fans manage to maintain their normative roles and keep their “abnormal” queer activities hidden from fans on mainstream sites.

The inclination of SG fans to uphold their normative identities in mainstream spaces is also shown in the ways these fans perceive their own slash activity. Some fans advise others not to post queer discussions of SG celebrities on mainstream sites, as they believe it will get SG slash fans into a lot of trouble.¹⁵ Also, when SG slash fans post pictures and information borrowed from mainstream sites, they refer to these acts as “stealing” (Tou). The negative connotation of this ubiquitous virtual practice is symbolic of the association of slashing with underground, illegal activities that are supposed to be kept secret. SG slash fans also use the word “convulse” (Chou) to refer to the queering of official materials drawn from mainstream media, which suggests that these fans perceive their queer readings as abnormal, insane behavior. SG slash fans therefore constantly reference the homophobic nature of mainstream Chinese culture by framing their slash practices on FSCN in these ways. In doing so, they are able to voice their queer desires and protect their non-mainstream, imaginative space while still performing in conformity with dominant ideologies that ostracize queer cultures in online and offline spaces.

Queer desires, although no longer officially pathologized or criminalized, are still positioned as unjustified lust or psychological perversion in heteronormative Chinese popular culture.¹⁶ Even though SG slash fans can confine their queer fantasies within a virtual, non-mainstream space on FSCN, there is still a fear of being censured by online heteronormative fan communities.

they are able to voice their queer desires and protect their non-mainstream, imaginative space while still performing in conformity with dominant ideologies that ostracize queer cultures in both online and off-line spaces.

“FSCN is not about ‘Lesbian’”

FSCN is a femslash online fandom that emphasizes potential lesbian romances among SG celebrities. Since some fans might self-identify as queer, it would be a mistake to assume that all fans on FSCN uphold normative identities in online and offline spaces. Such fans may not try to deny their slash identities or necessarily feel uncomfortable with queering popular cultural texts and celebrity figures.¹⁷ Yet, the slash activities on FSCN often exclude nonfictional lesbian topics and the voices of self-identified queer fans. This aspect of FSCN further unmasks some of its fans’ compliance with the hegemonic ideology that invalidates real-life lesbian desire.

FSCN administrators frequently delete threads that discuss slash fans’ sexual orientations and monitor the number of self-identified butch and femme lesbians among site users. One of the main administrators of this forum, A Xiu Luo Zhi Shu Hai (hereafter AXLZSH), in response to fan discussions involving feminist and lesbian topics on FSCN, declared that “FSCN is neither a center for feminists nor a rallying point for lesbians.”¹⁸ Similarly, in a thread announcing the records of banned usernames and posts that had been deleted on FSCN, one fan asserted, “[some lesbian-themed] posts should be deleted, because [FSCN] is not a lesbian forum. Lesbian topics are not compatible with the content and nature of the FSCN forum.”¹⁹ In addition, some FSCN slash fans often stress that “exclusive pairings” (Wang Dao) of the SG celebrities are not about homosexuality or perversion.²⁰ In a thread about “random discussions” (Guan Shui) on FSCN, AXLZSH explained the reason for eliminating nonfictional lesbian topics on the forum in this way: “FSCN is a gathering point for female GL fans (Tong Ren Nv), [and] female GL fans are not homosexuals.”²¹

What makes this kind of anti-lesbianism yet pro-GL statement on FSCN intriguing is how it gets discussed in a popular thread about lesbian media worldwide. In May 2007, AXLZSH created a thread titled “Beauty Comes in Twos—A Building of GL Pictures” (Mei Ren Cheng Shuang—GL Tu Lou).²² In the thread, AXLZSH posted hundreds of homoerotic images drawn from Chinese lesbian movies, Japanese Girls’ love (hereafter GL)

comic books, American television shows featuring lesbians, Asian advertisements with lesbian connotations, and candid photos of real-life lesbians. As of August 2013, this thread has had more than 2,100 entries. In the descriptions of the posted pictures, AXLZSH states that “these kinds of pictures have nothing to do with lesbian-themed topics.”²³ Throughout the thread, AXLZSH emphasizes that all of these homoerotic media images, including the American TV show about lesbian sexuality, *The L Word* (Showtime, 2004–2009), are GL and not about lesbianism. This awkward categorizing of fictional, lesbian media as non-lesbian can be explained by a commonly shared belief in Chinese GL fan culture. GL is usually thought of as imagined, fictional romantic/sexual relationships between females, while lesbian/lesbianism are terms that refer to real-world, nonfictional lesbian identities, desires, and relationships.²⁴ Although some of the images on this thread clearly present real-life lesbians, AXLZSH denies that it has anything to do with “lesbian-themed topics” and tries to differentiate the lesbian media images fans fantasize about and nonfictional, real-world lesbianism. This denial illustrates how FSCN acts as a space where fans are invited to participate in virtual homosocial/homoerotic desires and fantasies but restricts queer fans’ discussions of nonfictional lesbian desires.

FSCN’s privileging of fans’ slash activities over the practices of self-identified lesbians, although aimed at validating the status of the online slash culture, eventually produces a cultural hierarchy within this fandom. In her discussions of racial and gender discrimination within slash fandoms, Alexis Lothian opines that slash fans often make their queer social spaces “exclusionary, revolutionizing the lives of only a chosen few.”²⁵ Indeed, slash cultures often embrace many problematic, discriminatory characteristics of mainstream cultures. The exclusion of real-world lesbian topics by AXLZSH and some other fans on FSCN their indicates slash fans’ eagerness for gaining legitimacy and obtaining a seemingly more justifiable cultural position in society. The ways these fans perform virtual queerness is through distancing FSCN from culturally stigmatized, real-world lesbianism and lesbians, and thus unveils FSCN’s function as an invisible regulatory tool that serves to elevate fans’ own status as “virtual, non-lesbian, slash fans” as opposed to lesbian-identified subjects. Yet, as Lucetta Yip Lo Kam explains, the silencing of lesbian-related issues and expressions should be understood “as [a] culturally specific for[m] of homophobia” widely circulated in dominant Chinese cultural discourses. Cultural discrimination on FSCN thus makes this slash fandom not only exclusionary but also partially homophobic.²⁶ This

paradoxical aspect of FSCN is exemplified especially in its fans' queer readings of SG celebrities.

Queer Readings and the Real-World Sexualities of SG Celebrities

A large number of FSCN fans are reluctant and even resistant to discussing the real-life sexual orientations of SG celebrities. However, in the past fans have questioned the legitimacy of their queer reading practices when their queer fantasies about certain SG celebrities start to blur the line between the media images of SG characters and contestants' real lives. For example, many fans who participate in FSCN's forums exhort others to be aware of the distinction between "reality" and what they refer to as the "imaginary queer." These fans' panic over real-life lesbianism can be better illustrated by examining their queer readings of one of the most popular 2006 SG contestants, Liyang Liu.

In the thread titled "[Guangzhou Competition Zone] A Building of Pictures of Guangzhou Fellow Student Liu" ([Guangzhou Sai Qv] Guangzhou Liu Tong Xue Tu Lou), fans actively post pictures of Liu, commemorate Liu's androgynous persona, and conduct queer readings of the homosocial bonds between Liu and other SG celebrities.²⁷ This thread was created in July 2006 and is still active. As of August 2013, it has had nearly 900,000 hits and more than 23,000 entries. However, a few posts in the thread directly point to Liu's potential lesbian identity in real life. In their queer reading of Liu, fans devote most of their attention to how "dreamy" and "princely" her outward appearance is.²⁸ However, few posts in the thread directly point to Liu's potential lesbian identity in real life. Most of the fans' comments avoid connecting her tomboyish look with a butch identity through framing her offscreen androgyny as a style trend. Fans frequently employ traditional expressions used to describe women, such as "pretty," "beautiful," "innocent," "graceful," and "elegant," to praise Liu's appearance. These words have no obvious lesbian connotations, but are discursive expressions used by fans to normalize and advocate for Liu's androgyny and help fans avoid the stigmatization and persecution associated with lesbian desire. Also, the fans on this thread often praise Liu for her "both beautiful and handsome" (You Shuai You Mei) look. In doing so, they categorize Liu's androgynous appearance as a type of Chinese "female masculinity" that embodies desirable masculine and feminine traits.²⁹ Through this framing of Liu's nontraditional gender and

sexual performances, fans promote Liu's androgyny as a fad performance and avoid linking it explicitly to lesbian or trans identities.

This tendency to avoid discussions regarding Liu's sexual orientation on FSCN was made apparent when Liu was involved in a scandal that revealed her lesbian identity. In June 2010, Liu's ex-girlfriend spoke out about their lesbian relationship and posted their text messages, pictures, and chat records in a blog.³⁰ Right after this scandal erupted, the queer readings of and slash writings about Liu on FSCN, which had been ongoing for more than four years, suddenly died down. Although not a single fan straightforwardly discussed this scandal in Liu's thread, a few posts revealed fans'ir disappointment. One FSCN fan sarcastically suggested that the sudden silence and feigned nonchalance expressed by this fandom was akin to the tale of "The Emperor's New Clothes."³¹ Several fans also said they believed Liu was a good person and hoped she would eventually find a decent lover.³² One anonymous fan expressed her frustration with the scandal, stating, "[I will] always believe that she is a nice person. [I] hope all will turn out well."³³ Another anonymous fan responded to this post, saying, "Me too. [I will] always try to forget [Liu]. She is not the one supposedly appearing in my world. I only hope that she will no longer trust anyone except herself."³⁴ Another fan referred to the removal of previously posted pictures of Liu on FSCN as "bubbles vanishing into thin air."³⁵ As these expressions illustrate, some slash fans had been well aware of Liu's offscreen lesbian identity. Yet, fans' suspension of their online queer readings of Liu when faced with evidence of Liu's sexual identity serves as the ultimate rejection of real-world lesbianism within FSCN. The updates on Liu's thread stopped for more than one year after the scandal. In December 2011, when several fans restarted the thread, it was transformed into a site for fans to primarily post pictures of Liu. Queer interpretations of her celebrity persona have become unpopular on the thread since then.

Conclusion

It is hard to determine the exact reason why Liu's slash fans abandoned their queer reading activities. The silence on FSCN regarding Liu's sexuality can, however, be read as an extreme strategy for "virtually-closeted" queer fans to seek escape from the reality of heteronormative forms of backlash. It is possible that, after the unexpected revelation of Liu's sexuality, some FSCN fans might have found it disturbing to continue fantasizing about and identifying with "real" lesbians and thus abandoned

this imagined community. It may also have been that the fans decided to remain silent so as to not contribute to public disputes over their idol's real-life sexuality in the interest of protecting Liu's privacy.

Whatever the reasons may be, slash fans' sudden silencing of their own queer desiring voices on FSCN indicates that, even in online slash fandoms, fans need to constantly negotiate hegemonic ideologies that define lesbianism in offline Chinese society as dishonorable, disturbing, and even monstrous. The scaling back of queer readings and slash writings on SG celebrities by fans on FSCN after learning these celebrities have acted on certain queer desires in their offscreen lives is an unfortunate case that illustrates the persistence of heteronormative, mainstream Chinese cultural values in virtual communities.

Notes

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- 1 Jim Yadley, "The Chinese Get the Vote, If Only for *Super Girl*," *New York Times*, 4 September 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/04/weekinreview/04yard.html>.
- 2 Kathleen Battels, "Do We Need a Gay Rights Saving Time?" *Flowtv* vol. 7, no. 10 (2008), <http://flowtv.org/2008/04/do-we-need-a-gay-rights-saving-time/>.
- 3 Ling Yang, "'Bent' Romance: Super Girl Slash Literature, Women's Desires, and Feminism," *Internet Culture and Literature* 9, 2010, <http://wlwx.literature.org.cn/Article.aspx?ID=46197>.; Ling Yang and Hongwei Bao, "Queerly Intimate: Friends, Fans, and Affective Communication in a *Super Girl* Fan Fiction Community," *Cultural Studies* 26, no. 6, (2012): 842–871. doi: 10.1080/09502386.2012.679286; Audrey Yue and Haiqing Yu, "China's Super Girl: Mobile Youth Cultures

- and New Sexualities,” in *Youth, Media and Culture in the Asia Pacific Region*, ed. Usha M Rodrigues and Belinda Smaill (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 117–134.
- 4 Yang, “‘Bent’ Romance”; Yang and Bao, “Queerly Intimate.”
 - 5 Yang, “‘Bent’ Romance.”
 - 6 Yang and Bao, “Queerly Intimate.”
 - 7 FIRE1001, 1 June 2007 (4:50 p.m.), comment on A Xiu Luo Zhi Shu Hai, “[Random Discussions] Tell Pure Fans, How to Differentiate X Haters Here~~~Heihei,” *FSCN*, 31 May 2007 (11:24 p.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/207776234?pn=3>; A Xiu Luo Zhi Shu Hai, “[Random Discussions] Tell Pure Fans, How to Differentiate X Haters Here~~~Heihei,” *FSCN*, 31 May 2007 (11:24 p.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/207776234?pn=1>. “Pure” fans here refer to some mainstream fans who only favor one single SG celebrity and often refuse to couple their idol with other SG celebrities.
 - 8 Yang and Bao, “Queerly Intimate”: 847.
 - 9 Alexander Doty, *Making Things Perfectly Queer* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), XV.
 - 10 For more details, see <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/166973394?pn=193>.
 - 11 Shang Shu Fu Ge Ji, 25 April 2007 (12:37 p.m.), comment on San Shao Nai Nai De Shan Zi, “Peking Opera Blues,” *FSCN*, 27 January 2007 (12:31 a.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/166973394?pn=193>
 - 12 Ba You 218.13.210, 25 April 2007 (12:31 p.m.), comment on San Shao Nai Nai De Shan Zi, “Peking Opera Blues,” *FSCN*, 27 January 2007 (12:31 a.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/166973394?pn=193>; Ba You 218.13.210, 25 April 2007 (12:34 p.m.), comment on San Shao Nai Nai De Shan Zi, “Peking Opera Blues,” *FSCN*, 27 January 2007 (12:31 a.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/166973394?pn=193>.
 - 13 Constance Penley, “Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Study of Popular Culture,” in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 494.
 - 14 Susanne Jung, “Queering Popular Culture: Female Spectators and the Appeal of Writing Slash Fan Fiction,” *Gender Forum Gender Queeries* 8 (2004), <http://www.genderforum.org/fileadmin/archiv/genderforum/queer/jung.html>.
 - 15 Liao Liao Ai Yang Shang, 29 October 2006 (9:41 p.m.), comment on Hua Li De 33 Luo Bo, “[Yang Shang/Shang Yang] Are There More Sesames or More Chestnuts?,” *FSCN*, 25 September 2006 (10:51 a.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/135579815?pid=1259972371&cid=0#1259972371>; Pi Pi Xiao Luo Bo, 11 January 2009 (11:58 p.m.), comment on Hua Li De 33 Luo Bo, “[Yang

- Shang/Shang Yang] Are There More Sesames or More Chestnuts?," *FSCN*, 25 September 2006 (10:51 a.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/135579815?pid=5285317978&cid=0#5285317978>.
- 16 Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen, "Queer Ethnography in Theory and Practice: Reflections on Studying Sexual Globalization and Women's Queer Activism in Beijing," *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 5, no. 2 (2008): 88–116; Yang, "'Bent' Romance."
- 17 Several fans posted original poems and discussions on *FSCN* involving their own online queer identities and/or off-line lesbian relationships, yet often in very ambiguous ways. Most of these entries did not receive much attention or have been deleted by the administrators. For more details, see <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/1721385260pid=22146430050&cid=0#22146430050>; and <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/1249240572pid=14883340264&cid=0#14883340264>. Also, there have been very active *FSCN* fans who have self-alleged to be both slash and mainstream fans of *SG* and did not use multiple pseudonyms while moving between online mainstream and slash fan sites. Some of these fans, such as *Ai Shang Fei Niao Yu Yu* and *San Er Chui Pao Pao*, often straightforwardly declare on *FSCN* that they only have one user name and do not "change clothes." These fans do not seem to be worried about the disclosure of their queer reading practices in mainstream spaces. Yet, other *FSCN* fans usually refer to this kind of behavior as being too bold and risky. For more details, see <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/212455612?pid=2006682171&cid=0#2006682171>; and <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/212455612pid=2008261975&cid=0#2008261975>.
- 18 A Xiu Luo Zhi Shu Hai, 22 August 2007 (12:39 p.m.), comment on Cuo Zhuo Shang De Chu Mu Cha, "[Chu Ci Mu Ge] Mo Shi Ran Chen Ai," *FSCN*, 22 August 2007 (12:56 a.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/252000513pid=2464416716&cid=0#2464416716>.
- 19 YS Bang Ming Bu Zhi Zhui Ming, 14 November 2006, comment on A Xiu Luo Zhi Shu Hai, "[Notice] The Records of Banned and Deleted IP, ID + Trash Can," *FSCN*, 25 September 2006 (3:28 p.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/135632348pid=1305139399&cid=0#1305139399>.
- 20 Liu Xiu Piao Piao Fei Wu, "[Newbie Questions] Starting a Post for Newbie," *FSCN*, 28 October 2007 (1:50 p.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/280393240?>

- [pid=2780872529&cid=0#2780872529.](#)
- 21 A Xiu Luo Zhi Shu Hai, “[Say Something] About the Issue of Random Discussions,” *FSCN*, 10 October 2006 (2:53 a.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/139250919?pid=1208799876&cid=0#1208799876>.
- 22 This thread is available to view here at <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/198230695?pn=1>.
- 23 A Xiu Luo Zhi Shu Hai, 6 May 2007 (12:52 a.m.), comment on A Xiu Luo Zhi Shu Hai, “[Happy Birthday to Xiao Xue Zai Fei] Beauty Comes in Twos—A Building of GL Pictures,” *FSCN*, 6 May 2007 (12:33 a.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/198230695?pn=1>.
- 24 letusgo, “The Understandings of and Differences between Yuri, GL, and Les,” *les168.com*, last modified 20 July 2011, <http://www.les168.com/article-159-1.html>.
- 25 Alexis Lothian, “Paper from Console-ing Passions: Televisual Transformation and its Discontents: Slash Fan Fiction, ‘Queer Female Space’ and Race,” *Queer Geek Theory* (blog), 27 April 2008, <http://queergeektheory.wordpress.com/2008/04/27/paper-from-console-ing-passions/>.
- 26 Lucetta Yip Lo Kam, *Female Tongzhi Communities and Politics in Urban China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 12.
- 27 The title of this thread refers to the city of the *SG* preliminary round which Liu was in, Guangzhou. It was created by Fei Xue Bao Zi on July 11, 2006. It is available to view at <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/113685568>.
- 28 Fu Huo YY, 2 September 2006 (3:11 a.m.), comment on Fei Xu Bao Zi, “[Guangzhou Competition Zone] A Building of Pictures of Guangzhou Fellow Student Liu,” *FSCN*, 11 July 2006 (8:25p.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/113685568?pn=35>.
- 29 Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen, “Intimate Practices, Conjugal Ideals: Affective Ties and Relationship Strategies among *Lala* (Lesbian) Women in Contemporary Beijing,” *Sexualities Research & Social Policy* 6, no. 3 (2009): 6; Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 5–9; Yue and Yu, “China’s Super Girl,” 123.
- 30 The article was originally titled “Those Things between Liyang Liu and Me (*Wo He Liu Liyang De Na Xie Shi Er* in Chinese).” This article and the pictures posted in the blog were deleted later by the author due to social pressure. Yet, this lesbian scandal had been reported and reprinted by many online and mainstream media outlets.
- 31 Fei Se Bai Cha, 27 June 2010 (10:13 p.m.), comment on Fei Xu Bao Zi, “[Guangzhou Competition Zone] A Building of Pictures of Guangzhou Fellow Student Liu,” *FSCN*, 11 July 2006 (8:25p.m.), <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/113685568?pn=740>.

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